Threw It Far Out Into the Water.

The SKY-MAN

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His Eyes Did Not Turn to Hers, But Remained Fixed.

SYNOPSIS.

Philip Cayley, accused of a crime of which he is not guilty, resigns from the army in disgrace and his affection for his friend, Lieut. Perry Hunter, turns to hatred. Cayley seeks solitude, where he perfects a flying machine. While soaring over the Arctic regions, he picks up a curiously shaped stick he had seen in the assassin's hand. Mounting again, he discovers a yacht anchored in the bay. Descending near the steamer, he meets a girl on an ice floe. He learns that the girl's name is Jeanne Fielding and that the yacht has come north to seek signs of her father, Captain Fielding, an arctic explorer. A party from the yacht is making search ashore. After Cayley departs Jeanne finds that he had dropped a curiously-shaped stick. Captain Planck and the surviving crew of his wrecked whaler are in hiding on the coast. A giant ruffian named Roscoe, had murdered Fielding and his two companions, after the explorer had revealed the location of an enormous ledge of pure gold. Roscoe then took command of the party. It develops that the ruffian had committed the murder witnessed by Cayley. Roscoe plans to capture the yacht and escape with a big load of gold. Jeanne tells Fanshaw, owner of the yacht, about the visit of the sky-man and shows him the stick left by Cayley. Fanshaw declares that it is an Eskimo throwing-stick, used to shoot darts. Tom Fanshaw returns from the searching party with a sprained ankle. Perry Hunter is found murdered and Cayley is accused of the crime but Jeanne believes him innocent.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

"I might have saved him," he murmured brokenly, "if I had not hung aloft there too long, just out of curiosity; if they had been men to me instead of puppets. But when I guessed what their intent was, guessed that it was something sinister, it was done before I could interfere. I saw him going backwards over the brink of a fissure in the ice, tugging at a dart that was in his throat. And when they had gone—his murderers—"

"They?" she cried. "Was there more than one?"

"Yes," he said, "there was a party. There must have been ten or twelve at least. When they had gone I flew down and picked up that stick, which one of them had dropped—And to think I might have saved him!"

Her hand still rested on his arm. "I'm glad you told me," she said. She felt the arm stiffen suddenly at the sound of Tom Fanshaw's voice.

"Jeanne, take your hand away! Can you touch a man like that? Can you believe the lies—" but there, with a peremptory gesture, his father silenced him.

But even he exclaimed at the girl's next action, for she stooped, picked up the blood-stained dart which lay at Philip Cayley's feet, and handed it to him. "Throw it away, please"—she said, "overboard, and as far as you can."

Even before the other men cried out at his doing the thing she had asked him to, he hesitated and looked at her in some surprise.

"Do it, please," she commanded; "I ask it seriously."

Tom Fanshaw started out of his chair; then, as an intolerable twinge from his ankle stopped him, he dropped back again. His father moved quickly forward, too, but checked himself, the surprise in his face giving way to curiosity. At a general thing, Jeanne Fielding knew what she was about.

Philip Cayley took the dart and threw it far out into the water.

There was one more surprise in store for the two Fanshaws. When Cayley, without a glance toward either of them, walked out on the upper landing of the accommodation ladder, the girl accompanied him, and, side by side with him, descended the little stairway, at whose foot the dinghy waited.

"You are still determined on that resolution of yours, are you, to abandon us all for the second time—all humankind, I mean? This later accusation against you was so easily disproved."

"Disproved?" he questioned. "That beautiful faith of yours can't be called proof."

"I meant just what I said—disproved. They shall admit it when I go back on deck. Won't you—won't you give us a chance to disbelieve the old story, too?"

"I can never explain that now," he said; "can never lay that phantom, never in the world."

"I am sorry," she said holding out her hand to him. "I wish you'd give us a chance. Goodby."

This time he took the hand, bowed over it and pressed it lightly to his lips. Then, without any other farewell than that, he dropped down into dinghy and was rowed back to the floe—back to his wings.

When she returned to the deck she found that Mr. Fanshaw had gone around to the other side of it to see the sky-man take to the air.

But Tom sat, rigid, where he was. For the first time that she could remember, he was regarding her with open anger. "I knew," he said, "that you never liked Hunter, though I never could see why you should dislike him; and it didn't take two minutes to see that this man Cayley, with his wings and his romance, had fascinated you. But in spite of that, I thought you had a better sense of justice than you showed just now."

She flushed a little. "My sense of justice seems to be better than yours this morning, Tom," she answered quietly. Then she unslung her binoculars again and, turning her back upon him, gazed out shoreward.

"I am getting worried about our shore party," she remarked, as if by way of discontinuing the quarrel. "If there are ten or twelve men living there, in hiding from us, willing to do unprovoked murder, when they can with impunity—"

"So you believed that part of the story, too, did you?" Tom interrupted.

She did not answer his question at all, but turned her attention shoreward again.

A moment later she closed her binoculars with a snap, and walked around to the other side of the deck, where Mr. Fanshaw, leaning his elbows on the rail, was looking out across the ice-floe.

"Well," he asked briskly, as she came up and laid an affectionate arm across his shoulder, "I suppose you've been telling Tom why you did it—why you made Cayley throw that dart away, I mean; but you'll have to tell me, too. I can't figure it out. You had something in mind, I'm sure."

"I haven't been telling Tom," she said. "He doesn't seem in a very reasonable mood this morning. But I did have something in mind. I was proving that Mr. Cayley couldn't possibly be the man who had committed the murder."

"I suspected it was that," he said.

"It's the stick that proves it really," she said. "You remember how puzzled you were because the end of it which you held it by wouldn't fit your hand? I discovered why that was when you sent me in to get it a short while ago. It's a left-handed stick. It fits the palm of your left hand perfectly. You'll find that that is so when you try it. And Mr. Cayley is right-handed."

The old man nodded rather dubiously. "Cayley may be ambidextrous, for anything you know," he objected.

She had her rejoinder ready: "But this stick, Uncle Jerry, dear, was made for a man who couldn't throw with his right hand, and Mr. Cayley can. He did it perfectly easily, and without suspecting at all why I wanted him to. Don't you see? Isn't it clear?"

"It's quite clear that the brains of this expedition are in that pretty head of yours," he said. "Yes, I think you're right." Then, after a pause, he added, with an enigmatical look at her: "Don't be too hard on Tom, my dear, because you see the circumstances are hard enough on him already."

She made a little gesture of impatience. "They're not half as hard on him as they are on Mr. Cayley."

"Oh, I don't know," the old gentleman answered. "Take it by and large, I should say that Cayley was playing in luck."

CHAPTER VI.
Tom's Confession.

At intervals during the day those enigmatical words of Mr. Fanshaw's recurred to the girl with the reflection that they wanted serious thinking over, at the first convenient opportunity. But the day wore away and the opportunity did not appear.

The captain of the yacht—his name was Warner—was on shore in command of the searching party, but the first officer, Mr. Scales, remained on board. He was in possession of all the data, though they had not told him the story of Philip Cayley's old relation with the murdered man.

"It stands to reason," he said, "that the only party of white men that could be here would be the survivors of the Fielding expedition. We know from the news that young Mr. Fanshaw brought aboard that there is one such survivor here. If there were any considerable number of them left, able-bodied enough to walk across the glacier, we could be sure they'd be here on the shore waiting for us. We could be certain they would have made some attempt to signal us as soon as they sighted us.

"If they weren't white men but Indians—Chucotes—they'd have been quite as glad as white men to get a chance to go back with us as far as St. Michaels. And in the third place, if they were not Chucotes, but some strange, unknown, murderous band of aborigines, there wouldn't have been even one survivor of the Fielding expedition.

"Of course that's not an absolute water-tight line of reasoning, but it seems to me there is a tremendous probability that it's right, and that this flying man has lost his wits."

By four o'clock they had decided that, whether or not the sky-man's story might be true, it was high time to send a relief party ashore to find the lost ones.

At five o'clock accordingly, the relief expedition went ashore, and Tom Fanshaw and the girl were left alone on the yacht.

Two hours later, perhaps, after they had eaten the supper which Jeanne had concocted in the galley, they sat, side by side, in their comfortable deck chairs, gazing out across the ice-floe. The evening was unusually mild, the thermometer showing only a degree or two below freezing, and here in the lee of the deckhouse they hardly needed their furs.

They had sat there in silence a long while. Tom's promise that they would keep a brisk lookout against a possible attack on the yacht, had passed utterly from both their minds. It was so still—so dead still; the world about them was so utterly empty as to make any thought of such an attack seem preposterous.

Finally the girl seemed to rouse herself from the train of thought that had preoccupied her mind, straightened up a little and turned for a look into her companion's face. But this little movement of her body failed to rouse him. His eyes did not turn to meet hers, but remained fixed on the far horizon.

A moment later she stretched out a hand and explored for his beneath the great white bear skin that covered him, found it and interlocked her fingers with his. At that, he pulled himself up, with a start, and abruptly withdrew his own from the contact.

She colored a little, and her brows knitted in perplexity. "What an old bear you are, Tom," she said. "What's the matter today? It's not a bit like you to sulk just because we disagree about something. We disagree all the time, but you've never been like this to me before."

"I always told you I was a sullen brute when things went wrong with me, although you never would believe it," he said. "I'm sorry."

"I don't want you to be sorry," she told him; "I just want you to be a few shades more cheerful."

He seemed not to be able to give her what she wished, however, for he lapsed again into his moody abstraction. But after a few minutes more of silence, he turned upon her with a question that astonished her. "What did you do that for, just now?"

At first she was in doubt as to what act of hers, he referred to. "Do you mean my hand?" she asked, after looking at him in puzzled curiosity for a moment.

He nodded.

"Why—because I was feeling a little lonesome, I suppose, and sort of tender-hearted, and we'd been about half quarreling all day, and I didn't feel quarrelsome any more, and I thought my big brother's hand would feel—well—grateful and comforting, you know."

She was curious as to why he wanted the explanation, but she give it to him unhesitatingly, without the faintest touch of coquetry or embarrassement.

"I can't remember back to the time," she continued, "when I didn't do things like that to you, just as you did to me, and neither of us ever wanted an explanation before. Are you trying to make up your mind to disown me, or something?"

He leaned back moodily into his chair without answering her.

After a little perplexed silence, she spoke again. "I didn't know things were going wrong with you. I didn't even suspect it until this morning, when Uncle Jerry said—"

"What!" Tom interrupted. "What does the governor know about it? What did he say?"

"Why, nothing, but that you were playing in rather hard luck, he thought, and that I was to be nice to you. Is the world going badly— really badly—really badly?"

"Yes." That curt monosyllable was evidently all the answer he meant to make. At that she gave up all attempt to console him, dropped back in her chair and cuddled a little deeper down under her bear skin, her face, three-quarters away from him, turned toward that part of the sky that was already becoming glorious with the tints of sunset.

"You've never had any doubt at all, have you, that I really deserved the job of being your big brother; that I was that quite as genuinely as if I had been born that way?"

"No," she said; "of course not, Tom. What put such an idea into your ..."

He paled a little, and it was a minute or two before he could command the words he wanted, to his lips. "Because of my hopes, I suppose," he said unsteadily; "because I had hoped, absurdly enough, for the other answer. You asked as a joke a while back if I meant to disown you. Well, I do, from that relationship—because, I'm not fit for the job; because—because—I've come to love you in the other way."

She looked at him in perfectly blank astonishment. He would not meet her eyes, his own, their pupils almost parallel, gazed out, unseeing, beyond her.

Slowly her color mounted until she felt her whole face burning. "I didn't know," she said. "You shouldn't have let me go on thinking—"

"I didn't know myself until today," he interrupted her stormily; "I didn't know I knew, that is. But when I saw you put your hands on that villain Cayley, I wanted to kill him, and in that same flash I knew why I wanted to."

Turning suddenly to look at her, he saw that she had buried her face in her hands and was crying forlornly. "Oh, I am a brute," he concluded, "to have told you about it in this way."

"What does the way matter? That's not what makes it hard. It's loving you so much, the way I do, and having to hurt you. It's having to lose my brother—the only brother I ever had."

There was a long, miserable silence after that. Finally he said: "Jeanne, if you do love me as much as that—the way you do, not the way I love you, but love me any way—could you—could you—marry me just the same? I'd never have any thought in the world but of making you happy. And I'd always be there; you could count on me, you know."

"Don't!" she interrupted curtly. "Don't talk like that, Tom." She shivered, and drew away from him with a little movement somewhere near skin to disgust.

He winced at it, and reddened. Then, in a voice that sounded curiously thick to her, curiously unlike his own, he asked a question: "If I had told you all this a month ago—told you how I felt toward you, and asked you, loving me the way you do, to marry me just the same, would you?—Oh, I suppose you would have refused. But would you have shuddered and shrunk away from me—like that?"

"Did I shudder and shrink away?" she asked. "I didn't know it. I wasn't angry; I'm not now. But—but that was a terrible thing you asked of me."

"Would it have struck you as horrible," he persisted, "if I had asked it a month ago?"

"Perhaps not," she answered thoughtfully. "I've changed a good deal in the last month—since we sailed away from San Francisco and left the world behind us—our world—and came out into this great white empty one. I don't know why that is."

"I know." He was speaking with a sort of brutal intensity that startled her. "I know. It's not in the last month you've changed; it's within the last 24 hours; it's since you saw and fell in love with that murderous lying brute of a Cayley."

"I don't know," she said very quietly, "whether you're trying to kill the love I have for you—the old love—or not, Tom, but unless you're very careful, you'll succeed in doing it. I don't think I want to talk to you any more now, not even sit here beside you. I'm going to take a little walk."

He held himself rigidly until till she had disappeared round the end of the deckhouse. Then he bent over and buried his face in his hands.

What the thing was that roused him to his present surroundings he never knew. He was conscious of no sound, but suddenly he sat erect and stared about him in amazement. It had grown quite dark. It must be two or three hours since Jeanne had left the chair beside him and announced that she was going to take a little walk.

He spoke her name, not loudly at first, for he thought she must be close by. But the infinite silent spaces seemed to absorb the sound of his voice. There was no sign that any sentient thing, except his very self, had heard the words he uttered. Then he called louder.

The steps were rather difficult to negotiate, but by using both hands to supplement his one good foot, he succeeded in creeping down them, and then in making his way along the corridor to the girl's door.

He knocked faintly at first; then louder, and finally cried out her name again, this time in genuine alarm. He tried the door, found that it was not locked, and opening it and switching on a light, perceived that the stateroom was empty.

He heard footsteps crossing the deck overhead. No, that could not be Jeanne; it was a heavy tread, a curious, shuffling tread.

He closed the door behind him. Then he limped slowly down the corridor toward the foot of the companionway. The heavy tread was already descending the stairs.

He turned the corner, stopped short and gasped. And that was all. There was no time even for a cry. He had caught one glimpse of a monstrous figure clad in skins, huge in bulk, hairy-faced like a gorilla.

And then, the man or beast had, with beastlike quickness, lifted his arm and struck. And Tom Fanshaw dropped down at his feet, senseless.

CHAPTER VII.
The Rosewood Box.

On the girl, Tom Fanshaw's passionate, stormy avowal had the effect of a sort of moral earthquake. It left the ground beneath her feet suddenly unstable and treacherous; it threatened to bring down about her ears the whole structure of her life. The very thing she had relied upon for shelter and security against outside troubles and dangers, was, on the instant, fraught with a greater danger than any of them.

For the first few moments after his avowal she had felt no emotion other than that of astonishment and incredulity. Even when he asked her if she could not marry him, anyway, though the question revolted her, she told the truth in saying that she was not angry.

The anger came later, but it burned into a flame that was all the hotter for its tardiness in kindling. It must have an outlet somewhere, and as such, the promenade up and down the other side of the deck was altogether insufficient.

The sight of a small boat at the foot of the accommodation ladder seemed to offer something better. So, pulling on a pair of fur gauntlets, she dropped into it, cast off the painter, shipped the pair of light oars it contained, and rowed away without any thought of her destination—of any destination whatever; without, even, a very clear idea of what she was doing. She must do something; that was all she knew. Certainly she pulled away from the yacht's side with no idea that she was running into any possible danger.

It was half a mile, perhaps, from the yacht to the particular bit of shelving beach toward which she unconsciously propelled the boat. She rowed steadily, without so much as a glance over her shoulder, until she felt the grate of the shingle beneath the bow.

She became aware, not only that she had unconsciously come ashore, but also that the yacht was nowhere to be seen. A bank of fog had come rolling in from the eastward, so heavy as to render an object 100 paces away totally invisible. The clump of empty buildings here on the beach could hardly be half that distance, as she remembered, yet looking round from her seat in the row boat, she could make out no more than their blurred masses against the white ice and sand which surrounded them.

She scrambled out of the boat and pulled it high up on the beach. The fog made the air seem cold, though for the arctic it was a mild night. Two of the abandoned buildings on the beach behind her were mere sheds, windowless, absolutely bare, never having served, evidently, any other purpose than that of storage. But the third, and largest, as she remembered it, offered a shelter that was becoming attractive. There were some rude bunks in it where she could rest comfortably enough; and, unless she was mistaken, Scales had left in the hut a half-burned candle which they had used in exploring its dark interior. She had a box of wax vestas in her pocket. She could go in there and make herself at home, and at the same time keep an alert ear for a hail from the yacht.

She found the candle in the place where she remembered Scales had laid it down, struck a light and wedged the candle into a knot-hole. She turned toward one of the bunks with the idea of stretching out there, and by relaxing her muscles, persuade, perhaps, her overstrung nerves to relax, too.

She had taken a step toward it, indeed, before she saw, through the murk and candle smoke, the thing that lay right before her eyes—a rather large, brass-bound rosewood box or chest. It had not been here in the afternoon when they had entered the place, for they had searched its bare interior thoroughly in the hope that there might be something which previous investigators had overlooked. This box, six inches high and a foot long, or more, could not have been here then. It was standing now in the most conspicuous place in the room—in the very middle of the bunk.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Need for Two Collars.

Having bought a dog that he admired a Washington Heights man undertook to buy a dog collar. The dog had a neck nearly as big as his head and the dealer advised the man to buy two collars.

"What for?" said the man. "He's got only one neck, so I guess he can get along with only one collar, can't he?"

"Maybe so," said the dealer, so the man went away leading the dog by his new collar and chain.

In less than a week he brought the dog back.

"I'm afraid I can't keep him," he said. "He is too obstreperous. I can't keep him tied up. His neck is the biggest part of him and he is as strong as an ox, therefore it is a sinch for him to slip his collar off."

"That is why I wanted you to take two collars," said the dealer. "Put both on and fasten the chain to the back collar and he can tug away all night without getting loose. He may commit suicide, but he won't get loose."